

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 506

By Vital

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the contributions of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald School communities to the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), the son of German Jewish immigrants, helped make Sears, Roebuck & Co. the retailing powerhouse of the early twentieth century and used his enormous wealth to become an innovative and transformative American philanthropist; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Rosenwald partnered with Booker T. Washington, the Tuskegee Institute, and nearly 5,000 African-American communities that hungered for education for their children to build Rosenwald School facilities across fifteen states between 1912 and 1932 that educated, at one point, one-third of the African-American children in the South; and

WHEREAS, Rosenwald Schools were erected in all three of Tennessee's grand divisions through the efforts of African-American communities across the State who worked with the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the Tuskegee Institute. In Tennessee, nearly 45,000 children were taught across the 373 Rosenwald Schools, teacher homes, and shop buildings. Today, some of these buildings still stand and are preserved through the efforts of alumni, local communities, and other organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, established in 1917, awarded fellowships to nearly 900 people in over forty disciplines from 1928 to 1948 to help advance their careers. Two-thirds of them were African-Americans and included Dr. Charles S. Johnson, the first African American President of Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, the Julius Rosenwald Fund Library Program established more than 10,000 schools, colleges, and public libraries and funded library science programs that trained African-

American librarians. The fund also supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including Fisk, Tuskegee, Howard, and Dillard universities, Meharry Medical College, and Morehouse College; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1940s, the archives of the Julius Rosenwald Fund were transferred to the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library at Fisk University in Nashville. The university maintains a database of information about Rosenwald schools and the women of Rosenwald. Approximately 150,000 items reflect Julius Rosenwald's two decades of service; and

WHEREAS, the Rosenwald Fund supported early National Association for the Advancement of Colored People legal cases that eventually led to the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* case before the Supreme Court and also contributed to improving the health of African Americans through more accessible and better hospitals and clinics and better training for African-American doctors, nurses, and midwives; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Rosenwald was a founder and the first president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the founding donor of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Julius Rosenwald, through his partnerships and challenge grants, contributed to the education of African Americans at all levels, which enabled them and their descendants to lead a better life, and contributed in numerous ways to enhance the concept of challenge grants in American philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, a nationwide effort is now underway to create a Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park to be selected by the National Park Service, recognizing Julius Rosenwald's contributions to education in the South; and

WHEREAS, the planned National Park will be the first of 424 National Park units to address four gaps in the National Park System: to address the key impact of Rosenwald

Schools on African-American education in southern states; to commemorate the life and legacy of a Jewish American; to highlight early African American and Jewish partnerships; and to focus on American philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville will display two exhibits highlighting Julius Rosenwald and African-American communities in the State. The first exhibit is a traveling photography exhibit titled *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America* by the photographer Andrew Feiler. It will be open to the public from February 24 to May 21, 2023. The second exhibit, in partnership with the Fisk University's John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, will be titled *Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee* and specifically focus on Rosenwald School communities in Tennessee. It will be open to the public from June 16, 2023, to February 25, 2024; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize the contributions of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald School communities to the State of Tennessee and salute their legacies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.